

Aikido of Columbus



BEGINNER'S HANDBOOK

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Welcome to Aikido of Columbus.

We are pleased to welcome you to our Aikido community.

Aikido is an inexhaustible source of wonder and enjoyment, but the practice may be very different from anything you have ever done before. The only way to understand Aikido is through physical practice, but this guide will help you begin to develop an understanding of Aikido and the way we practice the art. It will also provide answers to some of the questions that may arise for you as you observe Aikido or begin the practice of Aikido.

Once you start practicing, don't feel that you have to memorize the information in this beginner's handbook. It is here to help you, just in case you have some questions.

If you have any questions about what you are doing, seeing or feeling as you enter into the world of Aikido practice, ask. Ask the advanced students, or ask the instructors. Asking questions will help you understand what you are practicing.

Aikido: The Way of Harmonious Energy	2
Aikido: A Brief Etymology	3
What a Typical Class is Like	4
Common Questions About Aikido	5
Head Instructors	6
Columbus Center for Movement Studies	7
Practice Information	9
Policy on Blood-Borne Pathogens	11
Aikido as Physical Exercise	13
Centered Movement	14
Basic Hand and Foot patterns	15
What Can I Practice at Home?	17
Aikido Practice	20
Common Challenges	22
Dojo Participation & Meetings	24
Aikido Vocabulary	26
Aikido history	31
Memoir of the Master	37
Rank & Testing	40



AIKIDO

THE WAY OF HARMONIOUS ENERGY

Aikido is

- Non-violent self-defense
- Non-competitive movement practice
- Compassionate conflict resolution
- Mind/body awareness and integration
- Relaxation and good exercise
- Beautiful flowing movement
- Fun

AIKIDO is a modern Japanese martial art especially suited to the needs of today. It is a non-violent form of self-defense and a discipline of mind/body awareness and integration. Aikido defense techniques consist primarily of joint locks and throws and are based on receiving the attacker with compassion and going along with the power of the attack to defeat aggression.

Aikido is not a tool for “winning.” There are no matches or competitions. Its smooth, circular, and flowing techniques use body wisdom and inner energy rather than requiring great muscular power and speed. Aikido can be practiced and enjoyed by anyone regardless of age, size or strength. Aikido is an enjoyable learning adventure carried out in a mutually supportive atmosphere. Because students move and learn at their own pace, Aikido is an effective form of exercise and relaxation that people can continue for their whole life.

Aikido offers a practical and effective form of self-defense that aims at protecting yourself without hurting another human being. The goal of Aikido is to learn to move and live in a state of power, gentleness, freedom, and harmony.

CHILDREN'S AIKIDO classes use Aikido games as well as formal defense techniques to create a fun-filled learning situation. Basic self-defense is covered, though it is strongly emphasized that fighting is not a game and should be avoided if at all possible. Through cooperative, non-competitive, non-violent martial art training, children gain an understanding of how to get along with others and how to resolve conflicts in a humane way. The Aikido methods of body awareness and coordination help children improve their performance in everything they do, from soccer to violin. And the training in relaxation and concentration help children in such things as homework or paying attention in school.

AIKIDO: A Brief Etymology

The word **AIKIDO** is composed of three Sino-Japanese ideographs:

ai, meaning harmony or blending;

ki, indicating the universal life force or etheric energy of the universe; and

do, which means a road or path, and can imply a way or life.

Thus, among its many nuances is the meaning of a way of life in harmony with the natural life forces of the universe.



AI may be seen as a roof which shelters two other components. The horizontal line is the number “one” and also means a single unit. The square was originally a circle which was also used to indicate a group. the ideograph is a picture of single family group in its house. Thus, the meaning came to mean “**to match**” or “**to blend**” harmoniously like the members of a family under the same roof.



KI has two parts. The upper portion shows three lines that formerly rose vertically from the forth at the left. These represent steam rising from a surface. Without the lower portion this shape is still a ‘picture’ of steam rising from the water or earth. The lower part is the character for rice and displays the grains assembled on a central stalk. For the ancient Chinese, steam rising from cooked rice was the very substance of life because without taking in this ‘**breath of life**’ one would starve. Over time the meaning broadened and ki became a symbol of **vitality** or strength and came to be used in words implying **will**, intention, and **essence**. In oriental philosophy, it came to represent the fundamental energy of creation, the pervading energy of the universe, the very **life force** itself.



DO also has two parts. The right half shows two lines over another, perhaps eyes and a mouth. The bottom portion is the character for the “self”. When used independently, this combined shape is a picture of the head over the body connected by the “neck”. The curved part at the left with the long tail is actually the character for the foot. The complete character, then, shows the neck supported by the feet. ‘One takes one’s neck down the “**road**” with the feet’ is a story used by children to remember the meaning of this character. As the character began to be used philosophically, it took on the nuance of taking your life into your hands and committing yourself to a particular **path** or vocation. For over a thousand years this word has been used to symbolize the all-encompassing path of religious or moral commitment -- one’s chosen “**way of life**”.

Courtesy of Larry Bieri

WHAT A TYPICAL AIKIDO CLASS IS LIKE

There are many many combinations of attacks and defense techniques to practice. Underlying that practice is the study of body awareness and movement and the study of conflict and harmony. Every Aikido class is different, but there are some typical patterns that you will experience in all the Aikido classes.

Each class will start with warm ups of some kind. Different instructors will have different warm up routines, but there will always be some slow stretching to get the body ready for more vigorous movement.

After warm ups, the class will generally move to slow practice of Aikido techniques. This gives people the opportunity to begin moving and centering themselves before having to undertake vigorous practice and harder falls. Once people have begun to get into the flow of the movement, the instructor will have people speed up the movement. Finally as people begin doing full Aikido movement, the practice may take off in different directions.

The instructor will choose the techniques to practice in the class. S/he may look at different defenses for a single attack or at different attacks that a single defense may work with. Sometimes the organizing idea in a class will be a movement or energy theme. For example, the class may examine how a given spiral of movement shows up in different defense techniques, how the same movement pattern occurs in sword work and unarmed Aikido, or how an energy quality of expansiveness can affect a variety of movements.

Aikido is not rote practice of unvarying movements. A unique and important part of Aikido is the process of exploration and personal discovery — both of the nature and meaning of the defense techniques, and of your own personal style of movement and awareness. Important elements to explore are your responses to pressure and the ways you interact with your practice partners.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT AIKIDO

Aikido is completely new for most people, something unlike anything they have ever done in their lives. Most people have questions and anxieties about beginning Aikido. Most of the common questions have simple answers.

- 1) **What kind of shape do I have to be in?** Aikido practice can be tailored to meeting your needs and abilities, so you don't have to be in good shape to start.
- 2) **Do I have to be big and strong to do Aikido?** No, Aikido techniques depend on softness and efficiency of movement, not sheer bulk or strength.
- 3) **Is Aikido good exercise?** Yes, it definitely is, but you will start off practicing slowly and get more vigorous as you learn how to do the movements safely.
- 4) **Are injuries common?** No. Since Aikido is non-competitive and since the techniques are designed to be non-violent, there are relatively few injuries in Aikido.
- 5) **Am I too old to start practicing?** Aikido can be practiced and enjoyed safely by people of any age. If you have any questions about specific medical conditions, check with your doctor.
- 6) **Won't the advanced students be irritated at having to practice with a beginner?** No they won't. We change partners frequently. Everyone practices with everyone else. Advanced students can learn from beginners, and the willingness to help beginners is part of the spirit of Aikido.
- 7) **Is there a religious component to Aikido?** No there is not. There is an underlying philosophy of respect for life, but no religious practices. The founder of Aikido was devoutly religious and expressed his understanding of Aikido in his religious terms, but that is not part of Aikido as such.
- 8) **Do I have to speak Japanese or memorize a lot of Japanese vocabulary?** Definitely not. There are Japanese practice terms that are part of Aikido, but they will gradually seep into your memory as you hear them over and over again.
- 9) **How long does it take to get a black belt?** It may take around six years. However, it really depends on how often you practice, how athletic you are, and whether you are ready to deeply examine your movements. Everyone should practice at their own pace, and the black belt will come when it does.
- 8) **Can I use Aikido to defend myself?** Aikido is a very powerful and effective self-defense art. However, this question is essentially unanswerable. Whether you can defend yourself depends on who will be attacking you and how long you will have been studying. If you have practiced Aikido for three years and you are attacked by someone who has practiced Karate for twenty-five years, you will probably not be successful in defending yourself. Or you may surprise yourself and succeed.

HEAD INSTRUCTORS

Aikido as an art is subject to a broad variety of interpretations and approaches. When you enroll in an Aikido school, it is not Aikido that you are studying but the particular understanding of Aikido that is the vision of the instructors at that school.

Paul Linden and Peggy Berger are the chief instructors at Aikido of Columbus. With their broad background in movement practice, Paul and Peggy bring to their Aikido instruction a deep understanding of the relationship of the biomechanical, philosophical, personal, spiritual and martial aspects of Aikido.

Peggy Berger is a body/movement awareness educator and Aikidoist. She began her practice of Aikido in 1978 and holds a fourth degree black belt in Aikido, has her MS in Dance/Movement Therapy, and is certified as a Laban Movement Analyst, a Feldenkrais® instructor and a Being In Movement instructor. She uses Aikido defense techniques as experiential metaphors for examining reactions to life situations, opening to a larger sense of self, and creating new possibilities for emotional, physical and spiritual ways of being.

Paul Linden is a body/movement awareness educator and martial artist. He has his BA in Philosophy, his PhD in Physical Education, is a certified Feldenkrais® instructor, and is the originator of Being In Movement® training. He began his practice of Aikido in 1969 and holds a fifth degree black belt in Aikido as well as a first degree black belt in Isshin Ryu Karate. Paul uses Aikido defense techniques as vehicles for developing awareness of and correcting imbalances in breathing, posture, and inner energy. This process is a means of achieving a state of power and compassion, which leads to understanding of the practical effectiveness of Aikido as self-defense as well as the ability to live daily life with greater awareness and harmony.

COLUMBUS CENTER FOR MOVEMENT STUDIES

Aikido of Columbus is part of the **Columbus Center for Movement Studies**, the school established by Paul and Peggy. Aikido is one of the body and movement awareness disciplines taught at the center. The other disciplines focus on different aspects of movement and self-awareness, and it may be of interest to you to see how Aikido fits into the bigger picture. Some Aikidoists find that participating in these other movement classes or in private lessons improves their movement abilities and furthers their Aikido practice.

People come for body and movement awareness lessons to learn skills in the areas of relaxation and stress control, physical ease and economy of movement, emotional self-awareness and balance, and conflict resolution and communication. Many people come to enhance their personal growth and spiritual awareness, and many people come to enhance their professional, sports, art or business performance. Paul and Peggy have worked with people such as: Musicians, dancers, actors and artists. Bicyclists, runners, golfers and tennis players. Pregnant women. Construction workers and crafts people. Individuals with back and neck problems. Incest survivors and adult children of alcoholics. Physical therapists and massage therapists. Psychotherapists and clergy. Computer users, office workers, sales people and business executives.

Body and movement awareness lessons can span this broad range because body and movement are fundamental. Your body is the concrete aspect of your Self, and it is through movement that you act and live. Your thoughts, feelings, beliefs and intentions shape and are shaped by your muscle tone, breathing, body alignment, energy flow, and the rhythms and qualities of your movement. By becoming more aware of your body and your movements, you can gain deeper understanding of yourself. By knowing your movements and yourself better, you can find new possibilities in your life. You can learn to move in a way that is relaxed, powerful, sensitive, efficient and comfortable. And this way of moving is a pointer toward an inner wholeness in which body, mind, energy and spirit are integrated, your heart is open and supported by grounded strength, and your power and gentleness are unified.

Whatever physical tasks people perform, they will do them better in the state of mind/body integration. And whatever emotional, inter-personal and spiritual tasks people face, they will handle them better in this state of integration.

BEING IN MOVEMENT® mindbody training uses movement experiments to help you develop a more conscious awareness of your patterns of muscle tone, breathing, posture, energy, and movement. As you develop this awareness, you will experience how your way of using your body is shaped by and shapes your thoughts feelings, beliefs, and intentions. You will improve your skills in such areas as relaxation and stress control, flexibility, stability, mobility, power, sensitivity, compassion, and communication. And you will learn how to access the state of mental, physical, and

spiritual harmony and wholeness which is the basis for comfortable, effective functioning in any occupation or area of life.

FELDENKRAIS Awareness Through Movement® somatic education uses slow, gentle continuous movements to help you feel how to unify your whole body in fluid, strain-free spirals of movement. In the exercises, you will learn how to investigate your movements in a meditative, non-judgmental way. You will have the time and opportunity to feel how you habitually move and to discover how to free yourself from unconscious constrictions and limitations. Your body will become freer and more relaxed, and your movements will become more natural, coordinated, balanced, graceful and comfortable.

AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT (Inner Dance): Hidden within each of us are personal and archetypal energies that are unknown to us at a conscious level. We can allow these energies to unfold into intuitive, free-flowing movement by learning how to sensitize our selves to our inner impulses and let them set us in motion. This process of inner movement is a pathway into ourselves. It reveals to us our hidden depths and allows us to heal and become whole. As we move, we are observed by a silent witness. The presence of a witness intensifies our awareness of ourselves, and witnessing gives the observer the opportunity to discover what s/he brings to the act of perceiving.

LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS: Rudolf Laban developed basic principles of effort, shape, and space harmony. These principles describe the many ways that the body can shape itself, project into space, and vary movement dynamics. Through LMA, you can gain insights into your personal movement style and increase your awareness of what movement communicates and expresses. LMA can be applied to the understanding of any area involving movement, such as performing arts, therapy, management consulting, education, and nonverbal communication research.

PRIVATE LESSONS are available by appointment and give people the opportunity for personal guidance in applying the skills of mind/body awareness and integration to the questions that are most important to them. Cultivating a physical/psychological state of relaxation, power and sensitivity is a foundation for improvement in physical tasks such as using a computer, playing golf or playing the piano, and it is a foundation for improvement in such psychological areas as assertiveness, conflict resolution or recovery from childhood abuse.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE & ATTENDANCE CARDS

Aikido of Columbus has classes six days per week and a supervised free practice period on Sunday. You may come to any or all of the classes for your monthly dues. When you register, you will be given an attendance card. It has safety information on it as well as spaces for recording your practice hours (which you will need for rank testing). When you pay your dues each month, the instructor will note that on the card. Each time you come to practice, pull your card from the box, check off the practice date, and leave the card by the box. The instructor will put the card away after practice.

DUES

Dues are paid for the month at the beginning of each month. If you join in the middle of a month, that month is prorated, but after that you will be expected to pay for the whole month even if you will be practicing for only part of it.

Dues help create and maintain a place where all of us can come to practice and learn. Though it is not required, as a member of the Aikido community, it would be appreciated if you could support the community by paying even when you will be taking off a full month from practice.

PRACTICE ATTIRE

Most students wear a *keikogi*, the loose, white karate or judo uniform. The judo uniform is the heavy quilted one, and the karate uniform is the plain fabric one. Put your name on your keikogi, and wash it frequently, especially in hot weather. Beginners are welcome to wear any clean, loose clothes which have long sleeves and long pants.

CLEANING

After class each day, everyone participates in cleaning the dojo. This is not just for reasons of health and appearance, but it is about creating a community feeling for the importance of this practice space in our lives.

INJURIES

Injuries are rare in Aikido. However, if you are injured, make sure to inform the instructor, both of the injury and the circumstances which led to the injury. Make sure to seek appropriate medical care when needed. Be careful not continue to train with an injury when such training would exacerbate the injury or slow healing.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

For safety reasons, you must remove rings, jewelry and such. It is important that you trim your finger and toe nails short. And since some people have allergies, please do not use scents or perfumes. The next section will describe precautions for blood-borne diseases. However, precautions are important in dealing with all diseases. You are responsible not only for your own health and safety but also for the health and safety of your training partners. If you know or suspect that you have any illness which might affect or infect others, or which might impair your ability to train safely, you have the obligation to refrain from training until you are not a risk to others or yourself.

DOJO ETIQUETTE

As a Japanese martial art, Aikido has inherited some aspects of that Asian culture, most noticeably the bow. Aikido makes use of the bow as a gesture of commitment and respect. It is not a form of worship. It is more like a salute. When you enter and leave the dojo (the practice hall), stop at the door and bow to the *shomen* (the front of the school). Likewise, when you get on and off mat, bow to the shomen. You bow to your practice partner before and after practicing together, and you bow to Sensei (the instructor) before and after s/he begins to work with you.

You should be on the mat, ready to practice a few minutes before the class starts. For the last few minutes before class, you should sit quietly and focus your mind. We start class with a bow. Teachers and students all bow together to the shomen, as a gesture of our working together in Aikido toward the goal of self-understanding and universal harmony. Then the teacher turns toward the students, and the teacher and students bow toward each other and say “Onegai shimasu”, which means “I request the favor (of your instruction/cooperation in training)”. The instructor bows toward the students as a gesture of respect for their wishing to learn, and the students bow toward the instructor as a gesture of respect for the teacher’s sharing of knowledge. Then class starts.

If you’re late to class, quietly bow onto the mat, then do a sitting bow to the shomen, and enter into the practice.

When you are on the mat, there are two acceptable ways to sit. The preferred way to sit is in *seiza* (kneeling, sitting on your heels). Sitting cross-legged is also acceptable if you cannot sit *seiza*. Sitting *seiza* is safest in that you can move from that position if someone is thrown toward you, and *seiza* (as you will experience) promotes mental stability and alertness. Sitting cross-legged (upright, without slumping) is also safe and alert. Please do not sprawl with your legs out or sit back leaning against the wall.

At the end of class, the teacher and students bow toward the shomen and then toward each other. The students say either “Thank you” or “Domo arigato gozaimashita”, which means “I am very much/humbly obliged to you.”

SEMPAI/KOHAI

Sempai are students senior to you, and *kohai* are students junior to you. In Aikido, it is traditional for *sempai* to take responsibility for helping *kohai*. Before and after class you can approach the senior students for help with technique and questions about your practice. It isn’t an imposition to ask *sempai* for help. It is part of the tradition of sharing and helping in Aikido. And when you are a *sempai*, you will pay back your *sempai* by helping your *kohai*.

SENSEI

Sensei is the Japanese word for “teacher.” However, it means more than just “teacher.” It literally means “born before” and carries with it a feeling of respect toward those who have walked the path of wisdom before you and are your guides now. It is appropriate to address the instructors as “sensei” on the mat. After sensei offers corrections or help during practice, it is appropriate to bow and say thank you.

POLICY ON BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

Every once in a while, someone will get scratched during practice and bleed. We have adopted a policy to minimize the risk of transmission of HIV, Hepatitis-B, and other blood-borne diseases. It is important to realize, however, that current medical evidence suggests that the risk of transmission of HIV during the type of body contact that occurs in Aikido training is extremely slight. Organizations such as the NCAA and the U.S. Olympic Committee have concluded that persons infected with blood-borne pathogens should not be barred from participating in contact sports. These organizations have concluded that the already-slight risk of transmission of HIV and other blood-borne diseases can be reduced further by adoption of the Center for Disease Control “universal precautions” with regard to exposed body fluids.

In the dojo, we will observe these “universal precautions.” This means that instructors and students shall treat all exposed blood as if it were infected. The following measures will be observed at all times:

All ***first aid supplies*** required for following the universal precautions are located in the storage room.

1. Preparation for training: The most frequent points of contact between training partners are the hands. Other exposed parts of the body, which are subject to the risk of cuts and abrasions, are the feet and the area of the face and neck. For these reasons special precautions must be observed. Inspect the exposed parts of your body prior to training to ensure there are no breaks in your skin such as abrasions, open cuts or sores. If you have any breaks in your skin, clean them with a suitable antiseptic and cover them securely with a leak-proof dressing before coming on the training mat. Make sure that breaks in your skin stay covered while you are training. Suitable taping, gloves or socks will be necessary. If you notice that someone else has an open cut or sore, immediately advise them of the fact and cease training with the individual until the appropriate covering is in place. If the person does not immediately remedy the situation, notify the class instructor immediately.

Inspect your hands and feet to ensure that your fingernails and toenails are trimmed and smooth in order not to cause cuts. Wear a freshly laundered dogi, and never come on the training mat wearing a dogi which is blood stained to any degree.

2. Procedure for wounds incurred during training: If a wound becomes uncovered, is open, or is bleeding even to a minor extent during training, immediately stop training and leave the mat until the bleeding stops and the wound is securely covered as described above. If you need assistance in stopping the bleeding and covering the wound, each person assisting you shall wear a pair of latex gloves (available in the first aid kit). All used gloves and bloody cloths or dressings will be placed in a leak-proof plastic bag and disposed of carefully. Hands shall be washed with soap and hot water immediately after gloves are removed. Minor blood stains on dogi will be treated with the disinfectant solution kept by the first aid kit. If there are major blood stains, the dogi shall be removed immediately, placed in a leak-proof container, and handled carefully until it can be laundered or disposed of.

3. Procedures for contact with another's blood: If you come into contact with your practice partner's blood, immediately alert your partner to the fact that they are bleeding, leave the mat and follow appropriate disinfectant procedures. If you do not know who is the source of the blood, immediately locate the individual who is bleeding. Then both of you should leave the mat and follow appropriate disinfectant and protection procedures.

4. Procedures for blood on the mat: The partner of the bleeding person should stand by the blood and ensure that other students do not come into contact with the blood on the mat. The bleeding person should leave the mat to attend to the bleeding. The blood, regardless of amount, should be cleaned up immediately by wiping down the exposed surface with the disinfectant solution provided for that purpose. Each person assisting in this task shall wear latex gloves and shall dispose of the gloves and clothes used for the cleanup in the manner described above. Upon completion of the cleanup, immediately after gloves are removed, each assisting person shall wash his or her hands with soap and hot water.

(This section on blood-borne pathogens was adapted from the policy developed at Aikido West, with thanks to Sensei Frank Doran.)

AIKIDO AS PHYSICAL EXERCISE

In order to improve physical condition, an overload exercise must be employed, that is, some exercise which places a greater than normal stress on the body. Aikido offers the opportunity to get good physical exercise, but for safety and effectiveness you have to know your limits and pace your practice to fit your needs. Aikido practice can be gentle and mild or very vigorous and strenuous. If at any point during practice or after it you feel dizzy or nauseated, you have been practicing too hard and you should *slow down* your practice. If there is any question of possible medical contraindications to an exercise program, you should consult a doctor and schedule a health exam.

Cardio-Respiratory Conditioning

It is most effective to perform cardio-respiratory conditioning three times a week on alternate days. The pulse rate can be used to determine the highest and lowest levels of exercise that are both effective and safe for cardio-respiratory conditioning.

Estimated Maximum Heart Rate for exercise = $220 - \text{age}$.

Standing Resting Heart Rate is found by taking the pulse while standing quietly. You can feel your pulse at your wrist or on the side of your neck (don't press on both sides simultaneously). Ask one of the instructors if you aren't sure how to do this. Take the pulse before moving much. To find the number of beats per minute, measure the pulse for 10 seconds and then multiply by 6.

Lower pulse limit for effective exercise = $[(220 - \text{age} - \text{SRHR}) \times 0.5] + \text{SRHR}$.

Upper pulse limit for safe exercise = $[(220 - \text{age} - \text{SRHR}) \times 0.85] + \text{SRHR}$.

The pulse should be taken immediately after the exercise to determine the exercise heart rate. Two minutes after the exercise, the pulse should not exceed 120. If it exceeds 120 five minutes after the exercise, there may be a medical problem.

Prevention of Heat Disorders

During hot and humid weather, it is especially important not to practice too hard and to maintain adequate intake of water and salt. It is important to acclimatize yourself gradually to working out in the heat. Excessive sweating along with inadequate water and salt intake can lead to medical problems. If you feel dizzy or uncomfortable during hard practice in hot weather, get off the mat and drink water.

Heat cramps can occur when you are working out hard and sweating a lot. Heat cramps are characterized by muscle twitching and are caused by salt depletion.

Water depletion heat exhaustion is characterized by excessive thirst, weakness, mental dullness, elevated body temperature and reduced sweating.

Salt depletion heat exhaustion is characterized by headache, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and muscle cramps.

Heat stroke is very serious. It is characterized by hot, dry skin, very high body temperature (over 105°F), irrationality, muscle flaccidity, seizures, vomiting, rapid pulse and rapid breathing. Hospital treatment is crucial.

CENTERED MOVEMENT

Aikido is about moving and being Centered. You will hear a lot about this, but some basic ideas will help you understand this key Aikido concept. There are two basic aspects of centering practices, emptying out and filling up. Emptying out is the process of letting go of rigid patterns. Filling up is the process of enlivening the mindbody with relaxed strength. Emptying out is releasing energy blocks, and filling up is energy extension.

The basic stance in Aikido is “*hanmi*” the half-body or T-stance. The principles of centered movement can be described in terms of this particular posture. However, being centered really refers to the quality or feel of movement rather than to superficial physical position. Though you will not always be in the basic stance position, you should discover its meaning and maintain its feel. The basic Aikido posture includes the following:

Head erect. Eyes level and vision expanded.

Back vertical.

Shoulders relaxed and even.

Belly relaxed. Hips even.

Arms in an open curve. Hands and fingers open.

Knees not locked.

Feet in *hanmi* in full contact with the floor and with equal weight on each.

Power comes from the legs and hips and is channeled through the spinal column to the arms and hands.

Every part of the body is equally involved in every movement.

Alert and relaxed awareness of yourself and your surroundings.

The energy qualities of Aikido are called “Center” and can be described in terms of a balance and unification of all qualities.

OVERLY SOFT

limp
weak
fearful
indecisive
submissive
spaced out
dull
sloppy
lead

CENTERED

relaxed/firm
loving/powerful
careful/determined
flexible/resolute
following/leading
all-embracing/focused
calm/alert
casual/precise
rooted/light

OVERLY HARD

rigid
brutal
angry
fixated
domineering
clutching
keyed up
stiff
flighty

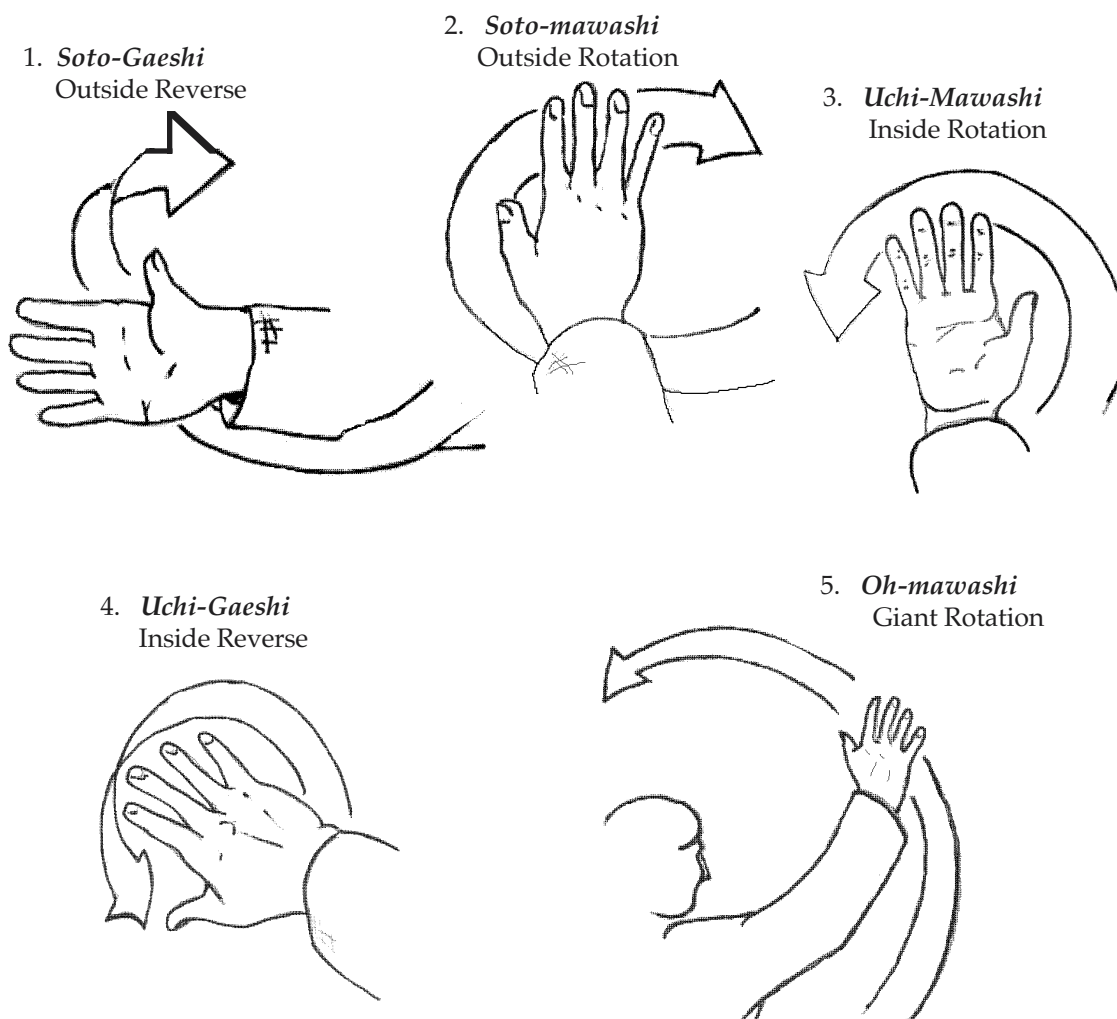
BASIC AIKIDO MOVEMENTS: *TE-SABAKI* - FIVE BASIC HANDWORK PATTERNS

1. ELEMENTS OF *TE-SABAKI*

- a. Relaxed neck and shoulders
- b. Open the hands and extend fingers as if holding a large ball with both hands
- c. The natural curve of arms is maintained during movement
- d. Move up from the thumb and down from the little finger
- e. Get off the Line of Attack

2. THE FIVE BASIC HANDWORK PATTERNS (*TE-GATANA NO SOSA*)

In Aikido, the hand is often referred to as the “hand blade” (literally the “hand sword”). We hold our fingers open and extended so that the heel of the palm and bottom of the arm are elongated while the top of the arm remains relatively relaxed. In this manner the natural curve of the arm resembles the shape of the Japanese sword, katana. Sometimes the basic *Te-sabaki* are referred to as the *Te-gatana no sosa*, or “the use of the hand-blade”.



Courtesy of Larry Bieri

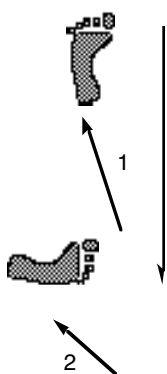
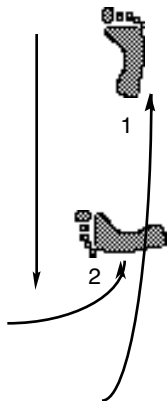
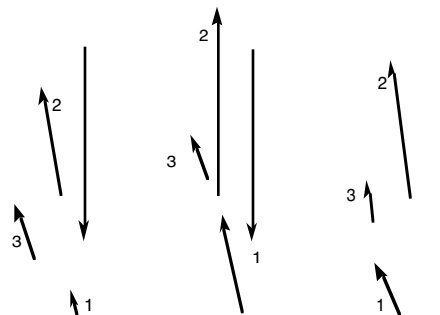
BASIC AIKIDO FOOTWORK: ASHI-SABAKI (Five basic movements)

Three types of footwork: Enter/*Irimi* Turn/*Tenkan* Pivot/*Tenkai*

1. ELEMENTS OF IRIMI (ENTERING) *Irimi-Isshoku* (One-step entry)

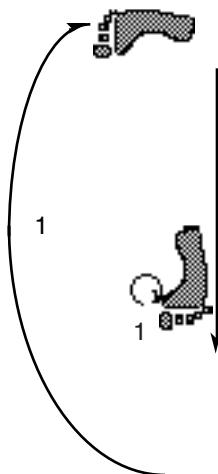
- Triangular stance
- Each type is performed as one step.
- Enter to the blind spot, *shikaku*.
- Both feet must move during each step!
- Get off the line of attack.

Note: The principle of *Irimi-Isshoku* implies that you must reach the blind spot behind your partner in a single motion. In these diagrams, foot movements are numbered; 1, 2, 3.... However, each type of stepping illustrated is nonetheless a single step. For example, *ayumi-ashi* is considered one step wherein both feet move. This principle is important for getting off the line of attack.

Three Ways to Perform *Irimi***1a. *Tsugi-ashi*
(Shuffle Step Entry)****1b. *Ayumi-ashi*
(Walking Step Entry)****1c. *Okuri-ashi*
(Transport Step Entry -- three ways)****2. ELEMENTS OF TENKAN (TURNING)**

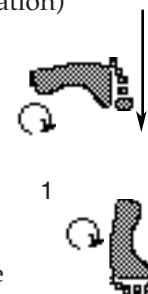
Enten no Ri
Principle of Spherical Rotation

- Fixed center
- Revolving radius
- Centripetal & centrifugal forces
- Get off the Line of Attack
- Complete body change (*tai-no-henko*)

**3. ELEMENTS OF TENKAI (PIVOTING)**

Enten no Ri
(Principle of Spherical Rotation)

- Revolving center
- Triangular stance
- Pivot on balls of feet
- As usual, get off the Line of Attack
- Complete body change (*tai-no-henko*)



Courtesy of Larry Bieri

WHAT CAN I PRACTICE AT HOME?

Many students ask what they can practice when they are not on the mat. Doing the basic stretching and breathing exercises at home will significantly improve your Aikido practice. Likewise, paying attention to balanced perception and movement in all your daily tasks will be very helpful, and of course the major reason to study Aikido is to apply principles of centering to your daily life.

STRETCHING

The following page shows the basic stretching routine we use at the dojo. The first thing to think about in doing these exercises is that they are not for stretching but for releasing and relaxing. "Stretching" implies a forcing or tearing of the body, and the use of force against the body is a very un-Aikido idea. However, we will call these exercises "stretches" just because that is the common term.

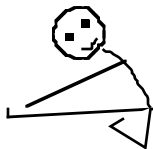
Each posture focuses on a specific part of the body. By paying attention to the sensations that are part of each posture, you will become more familiar with and able to control each part of your body. In each position, use a well-aligned posture, which will localize the sensations of stretch/release to a specific body part. The use of an open, lengthened body alignment will also make your breathing easier and more open. Your breathing should be full and easy. Your belly should expand gently as you inhale, along with your back and chest. Your breathing should not be forced.

As you concentrate on experiencing each posture clearly, you will become able to utilize a direct releasing/relaxing of any tight spots. Focus your mind on the area where you feel the tightness. Breathe into and release the tightness. Flexibility is about *learning* to move with ease. You will be able to use each posture as a way of learning to take responsibility for your body. Do not strain or force yourself into anything. Every move should feel comfortable. Go only as far in any posture as feels good to you, and don't pay attention to how far you see other people in class go. Work with what *you* feel. Find out what images help you access your own body. Discover what each exercise has to teach you.

HEART

This is a very simple exercise. First, think of someone who really rubs you the wrong way. Notice the changes in your breathing, muscle tone and posture. Most people find that they experience hardening and shrinking in the breath and their whole body. Now, think of someone or something that makes your heart smile. Most people experience a softening and warmth, especially in their chest and breathing, but also throughout their whole body. The exercise is to hold in your mind/body the image/sensation of what makes your heart smile. As you become familiar with this softening and opening, you can practice it at any time.

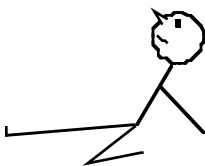
1. Massage



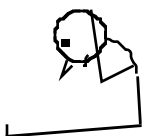
2. Side bend



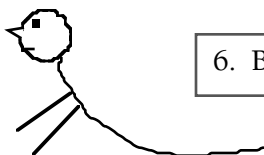
3. Forward bend



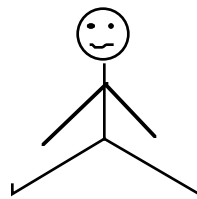
4. Thigh stretch



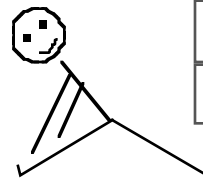
5. Neck stretch



6. Back arch

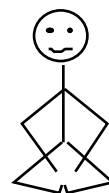


7. Chest to floor

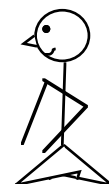


8. Same hand to ankle

9. Cross hand to ankle



10. Chest to floor



11. Spine twist



12. Kneeling

14. Six directions
breathing exercise

SIX DIRECTIONS BREATHING

The Six Directions Breathing exercise is a way of practicing the skill of relaxing and balancing your whole body. It is a way of bringing your inner core into relation with the outer world. Sit in an upright posture, either kneeling or sitting cross-legged on the floor, or sitting on a flat chair without touching the back. If you are sitting cross-legged or on a chair, use a towel roll for pelvic support. Ask Sensei for help in sitting in the balanced, strong posture that this breathing exercise requires.

Inhale through your nose, drawing the air gently into the core of your body just below your navel. Then exhale through your mouth, relaxing your mouth and throat. Inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth is just for this exercise. Normally you should breathe through your nose. Exhaling through your mouth is a preparation for action, and of course, it is how you breathe when you talk, so breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth in this exercise is a bridge between rest and action. You can ask Sensei for help in breathing properly.

In the exercise, you will “aim” your breath as you exhale. By practicing intending to breathe radiantly outward in a number of directions, you will actually open and balance your body. As you practice this exercise and gain skill with the breathing, you will find it productive to aim your breathe farther and farther away.

Inhale into your belly. Then as you exhale, imagine that you are gently blowing the air down your spinal column, out your bottom, to a spot six or eight inches below you. Don't just think about this or picture it in your mind, but actually *feel* it in your body, *do* it in your body. Make sure to keep your head/neck relaxed and level as you think downward.

On your second breath, imagine/feel that you are exhaling up your spinal column, out the top of your head, to a spot six or eight inches above you. Breathe gently. Don't purse your lips and blow, but just open your mouth, relax your throat, and let the air come out. On your third breath, breathe out of your right side toward a spot about six inches to your right. Next breathe out of your left side. Then breathe to your rear out of your low back, and next breathe forward out of the pit of your belly. On your seventh breath, breathe in all six directions at once, down and up, left and right, forward and back. Then start over with the first breath. Always start with the down direction because that is a way of stabilizing your mind and body.

This exercise is a way of practicing keeping an open, even, symmetrical awareness of your whole body. Most people, when they first start working with this exercise, experience that there are areas of their body or directions of their breath that are not clear for them. Any dim spot in the feeling of your body's field of attention is an area of reduced body awareness and reduced vigor. Finding gaps in your field of awareness and breathing life back into them is a way of remembering to live fully in your body. More than that, it is a way of contacting the feeling of living fully in the world. You can do this exercise for a few minutes every day, and it will tremendously improve your Aikido practice.

AIKIDO PRACTICE

Aikido practice takes years to mature. The essence of Aikido practice is a process of self-remembering and self-examination, and it is in that process that you will move closer to Centered movement.

THE NATURE OF TECHNIQUE

A difficulty that often arises for beginners is the nature of *kata* and the meaning of Aikido defense techniques. Kata is prearranged form, and most Aikido practice is kata. Practicing a kata with a partner means that there is an agreement about what the attack will be and what the defense will be. It means that the attacker has agreed in advance to “lose”. However, the attack and the defense must still be sincere and effective. If either is empty form without sincere combat intent, the practice becomes worthless. It may become limp repetition or empty physical force, but it won't be Aikido.

In sincere practice, two partners are trying to create together the physical and energetic experience of real harmonizing with an attack. In actual combat, the attacker will certainly be sincere, but s/he will actively try to prevent that harmonizing. In actual combat, the perceptive and Centered Aikidoist will harmonize with the attack, blend with it, lead it and defeat it. In combat, the Aikidoist supplies all the harmony for both people. In practice each person contributes half the harmony.

A difficulty that often arises in practice is that of forgetting to focus on self-observation. Real Aikido practice focuses on development of a fullness of spirit and body and an awareness of harmony in movement. Correct practice focuses not simply on throwing the attacker but on observing and improving the details of one's own breathing, energy, and movement. People who are strong can often do good physical movements and make the defense techniques work and yet not be participating in true self-observation and inner work. Simply because a technique works effectively does not mean that it is good Aikido.

The flip side of this problem is the experience of practicing sincerely and correctly yet finding that your technique won't get the attacker down. People often abandon Aiki at that point in favor of physical force simply because force “works”. Just remember that correct practice will eventually produce effective defense techniques, but that may take time. Physical force is simpler than Aiki, but much more limited. In the long run, it is better to practice a more Centered technique that doesn't work than to do a less Centered technique that “works”.

It takes time and practice to develop Aikido skill, and it takes lots of time and practice to develop enough skill so that one's defense techniques can be used effectively against someone who is bigger and stronger. It takes much more skill to perceive and harmonize with an attacker than it does to control her/him on the basis of size and strength.

MEANINGFUL PRACTICE

Aikido is not practiced solely for the purpose of learning how to perform effective defense techniques. The real meaning of Aikido lies in extending the principles of Aikido into every day life. Aikido techniques exist for the purpose of giving you a context within which to practice self-observation and improvement.

What is the real problem being addressed in Aikido practice? The real problem is fear and anger and the spiritual isolation and alienation created by fear and anger. When the attacker attacks, we harden ourselves and separate ourselves from him or her. Aikido techniques must be done lovingly to be combat effective. The effort in Aikido practice is to remember to observe yourself as you do the techniques and create an inner sense of power, compassion and expansiveness as the foundation for the outer defense technique. That is real Aikido practice, and if you work on that, you will find Aikido affecting your whole life.

NON-VIOLENCE

It is important to differentiate force, even destructive force, from violence. We can define violence as behavior motivated by fear, anger, and the desire to hurt and demean. That would mean that it is possible to fight to protect yourself or another, using force, in a non-violent way. That is the first aim of Aikido practice.

If you fight with fear and hatred in your body, you establish a mind/body habit which weakens you. Fighting with love and respect for your enemy, because there is no other option than fighting, is altogether different. At this time in the history of our world, it is important to move beyond habits of violence. We will destroy ourselves and the whole world if we use violent force. But in learning to be capable of using non-violent force to protect ourselves, we become capable of finding non-violent *non-force* ways of handling challenges.

It is human to react to a threat by lashing out violently to destroy what is threatening us. In being touched by an “enemy” in Aikido class, we have the opportunity to either react in the spirit of hurtfulness or root out the desire to hurt. Without the attack/defense interaction as a practice format, the seeds of hurtfulness would lie dormant within us, only to sprout when we are really attacked. In class practice, we find these seeds, sprout them, uproot them, and deliberately construct the mindbody state of power and love. And hopefully we will react more humanely when it's for real.

The ultimate aim of Aikido practice is the ability to find loving, constructive ways of overcoming threats without having to fight at all.

COMMON CHALLENGES

Every student is encouraged to practice at their own pace and level. Beginners are helped to go slowly and practice at a level which is safe and appropriate. However, many beginners will experience some common difficulties that can be part of starting Aikido.

The first difficulty is simply being a beginner. Everything will seem strange and difficult, and you will feel klutzy and out of place. Don't worry. Beginners are supposed to be beginners. The advanced people will welcome the opportunity to help you with your practice, just as they were helped when they were beginners.

Beginners often feel uncomfortable being attacked or acting the role of the attacker. However, the attack/defense process is a model for all of life's challenges, and learning to handle feelings of discomfort in Aikido is a way of finding harmony in all of life's difficult moments. In Aikido, the attack is a gift which allows us to practice and grow. There is no ill will in the attack or the defense.

Some beginners have an opposite difficulty: they feel that Aikido practice is unrealistic. In order to be safe, Aikido must be "unrealistic" to some extent. Aikido practice is *kata* — that is, pre-arranged attack/defense movement routines. Kata are meant to create a safe practice situation in which you can learn the basics, so that you have general patterns which you can intuitively and spontaneously modify to fit the specific requirements of a real attack. Kata are not meant to be actual combat.

Some beginners have a hard time accepting corrections to their techniques. It is hard for people to realize that such criticism is not belittlement but is offered as a gift and comes from a respectful desire to help people understand and improve. This is important. Mistakes are an opportunity to learn, and you will learn best if you enjoy discovering your mistakes. Try not to be ashamed of making mistakes.

During practice, the instructor will ask people to help demonstrate the techniques to be practiced. Of course, someone has to act the role of the attacker in order for the instructor to demonstrate the defense. Many people feel shy about demonstrating in front of the class, but everyone gets used to it. It is an opportunity to participate and learn, but you can always ask not to be used if it makes you too uncomfortable.

A few people may find that being attacked in Aikido parallels or brings up actual attacks they have experienced. If you feel this kind of discomfort, don't hesitate to ask the teacher for help.

Another area of confusion has to do with individual learning styles. Everyone is different, and each person learns and teaches in her or his unique way. You may find that some styles of practice don't seem to "speak" to you and you may feel like avoiding them. Sometimes it is right to follow your intuition and practice the way you know you need to. However, if you avoid everything that is unfamiliar and confusing, you will miss out on new possibilities. Sometimes it is right to practice what you are shown, even when you don't understand it or agree with it. Normally, proper class etiquette is to practice respectfully whatever is being taught in class.

If you are engaged in a practice that you feel is more than you can handle, you have options. In most situations, the problem can be solved by asking your partner to “go easier.” But if this does not help, you can simply excuse yourself and move to practice with another partner or sit out the particular practice that is difficult for you. At the next immediate opportunity, you can resume normal practice.

If there is some part of the practice that is too uncomfortable, talk with the teachers or advanced students about it and they will help you find a way to deal with it. You may wish to put off doing that part of the practice until you have more experience in Aikido. Usually it is possible to modify the training and make it more suitable for your stage of practice. In any case, as a beginner, you will never have to do anything that you don't want to, and you will never be made fun of.

If you experience a problem or conflict with a specific person during practice, you could talk with the instructors about it, or you could talk with senior students if you would find that more comfortable. You could also arrange a meeting between you and the other person, with an instructor present to help. If you feel that you are experiencing a problem which affects the whole dojo, you could bring that problem up at one of the dojo meetings.

Ask questions. If you have difficulties, talk with a senior student or an instructor off the mat when full attention can be given to your concerns.

Most of all, remember that Aikido practice can be a lot of fun, and don't let the difficulties get you down.

DOJO PARTICIPATION & MEETINGS

Aikido of Columbus is a community of Aikido practitioners, and we share the tasks involved in creating and maintaining the dojo. There are a number of committees which focus on various areas of dojo life. These include committees on PR, lending library, seminars, parties, and sales. You are welcome to join committees and your participation would be very much appreciated by all.

We hold periodic dojo meetings to discuss the workings of the various committees. In addition to discussing various things that are part of running the dojo, we also allot time in the meetings for discussion of thoughts and feelings about problems that arise in practice. At Aikido of Columbus we are attempting to extend the practice of Aikido into our lives and use Aikido as a way of resolving conflicts and creating harmony. The dojo meetings are opportunities to improve communication and resolve misunderstandings.

Problems that affect the whole dojo should be raised at a dojo meeting. Such problems might include safety issues or difficulties you experience in attitudes toward practice. If you are having a problem with a specific person and have not been able to resolve it by meeting with them privately, you could bring the difficulty up for discussion at the dojo meeting.

It is important to use appropriate non-attacking verbal approaches during any problem discussion. There are five guidelines for discussions at dojo meetings.

- 1) Everyone can speak, about both feelings and practical content.
- 2) Only one person at a time will talk. No interruptions.
- 3) Communication mirroring can be requested. If a person feels that their message has not been understood by the individual they are addressing, they could ask for that individual to restate the message in their own words. When the person feels their message has been heard and restated correctly, the discussion will proceed.
- 4) At any point in the discussion of issues, if it seems that people are being overwhelmed by feelings of conflict, a moment of breathing and centering could be called for.
- 5) File folder: Anything important that may come up but which is not appropriate for the current meeting's agenda would be put in a "folder" for the next meeting.

AIKIDO VOCABULARY

You don't need to be fluent in Japanese to practice Aikido. You don't need to memorize the following vocabulary, but you will hear these words in the practice. Over time the words will seep into your memory, but having a vocabulary sheet will help you become more comfortable with Aikido practice.

The pronunciation of Japanese words is very simple in that any word in the language is made up of one or more short syllables which are generally given equal emphasis.

The consonants of Japanese are usually pronounced like those of English except the "R", which is closer to our English "L" mixed with "D". (This "*Raito*" sounds more like "light-oh" not "right-oh." The vowels are pronounced like those of Spanish or Latin as follows:

A - "ah" as the a in father
 E - "eh" as the e in met
 I - "ee" as the i in Marine
 O - "oh" as the o in oboe
 U - "oo" as the u in rule

Each vowel in a word is pronounced, and two different continuous vowels form a diphthong. For example, *maai* is pronounced mah-eye.

GENERAL TERMS

Ai	harmony or love
Ki	spirit or energy
Do	the way or path
Aikido	the path to a harmonious spirit
Kiai	a shout in which or by which one's energy is focused
Bu	war or warfare.
Shi	knight or scholar
Bushi	warrior
Bushido	the way or code of the warrior
Jitsu or jutsu	techniques or practices
Budo	the martial way
Bujitsu	the study of fighting techniques
Samurai	from the verb meaning "to serve" The warrior class of feudal Japan.
Hara	the lower abdomen. The center of energy & movement.
Haragei	the cultivation of Hara
Tanden	the hara
Kotodama	meditation on the sounds of Japanese syllables
Zanshin	continuity of concentration, alertness, remaining prepared for the next attack
Shin	mind or heart

Mushin	no mind
Takemusu Aiki	limitless Aikido, spontaneous manifestation of infinite technique
Musubi	unification of opposites
Misogi	purification
Shugyo	practice as refinement and purification
Dojo	training hall
Shomen	the front of the dojo
Deshi	student, disciple
Sensei	teacher
O'Sensei	literally, "great teacher". Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido, is known to Aikido students as O'Sensei
Sempai	senior student, one who began Aikido before you
Kohai	junior student, one who began Aikido after you
Aikikai	Aikido Foudation. Japanese umbrella organization headed by a descendent of Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido.
Shihan	master teacher
Ichi	1
Ni	2
San	3
Shi (& yon in some combinations)	4
Go	5
Roku	6
Shichi (& nana in some combinations)	7
Hachi	8
Ku	9
Ju	10
Kyu	white belt grades
Dan	black belt grades
Shodan	the first black belt grade or a holder of it
Yudansha	black belt holder(s)
Keikogi	practice uniform
Obi	belt
Hakama	black divided skirt/pants
Seiza	formal kneeling position
Rei	bow or salutation
Reigi	ettiquette
Dozo	please
Onegai Shimasu (final "u" is silent)	I request the favor
Domo Arigato Gozaimashita	I am very much/humbly obliged to you.

WEAPONS

Jo	wooden staff approximately four feet long
Bo	wooden staff approximately six feet long
Tanto	wooden practice knife
Ken or tachi	japanese long sword. Two handed, curved, single edged
Katana	the Japanese sword
Bokken	wooden practice sword
Shinai	split bamboo practice sword

BODY PARTS

Ashi	leg
Men	face or head
Shomen	top or front of head
Yokomen	side of head
Me	eyes
Kubi	neck
Kata	shoulder
Hiji	elbow
Te	hand
Tekubi	wrist
Kokyu	breath
Kote	back of the hand
Tekatana	little finger edge of the palm, hand blade
Mune	chest and stomach region
Do	trunk
Kuchi	mouth
Hara	lower abdomen
Koshi	lower back

PRACTICE TERMS

Keiko	practice
Waza	technique
Kamae	a stance of readiness
Hanmi	the oblique, T-stance used in Aikido. Literally "half-body".
Hidari	left
Migi	right
Gedan	lower level of the body
Chudan	middle level of the body.
Jodan	upper level of the body.
Tsugi-ashi	shuffle step entry
Ayumi-ashi	walking step entry
Okuri-ashi	transport step entry
Ai hanmi	both partners with their right or left foot forward
Gyaku hanmi	one partner with left foot forward, the other with right foot forward

Tenkan	turning around to the rear
Irimi	entering in a straight line
Tentai	pivot from one hanmi to the other.
Hantai	in reverse order
Uke	receiver — a person who receive a technique. It generally refers to the person who attacks and is thrown.
Nage	thrower — a throw or the person who does the throw.
Maai	the distance between uke and nage. It literally means “Harmony of space.”
Kuzushi	unbalancing an opponent's posture
Kokyu	breathing, breath power

PRACTICES

Ukemi	the art of taking falls, literally “receiving body”.
Sutemi (pronounced stemmy)	a sacrifice technique, in which nage falls down to effect a throw.
Aiki Taiso	Aikido calisthenics
Tai no henko	basic blending practice
Kokyo dosa or kokyu ho	partner ki practice done in seiza, practice for coordinating breath, ki & movement. Literally, “breath power exercise”.
Shikko	knee walking
Hanmi handachi	nage is kneeling and the uke attacks from a standing position. Literally, “half standing, half sitting”.
Suwaru Waza	both nage and uke are kneeling
Taijutsu	the unarmed Aikido techniques, body arts
Kata	prearranged attack/defense exercise
Suburi	individual practice of a single movement of the
ken or jo	striking techniques
Atemi waza	switching from one technique to another
Henekawaza	counter techniques
Kaeshiwaza	knife taking techniques
Tanto dori	sword taking techniques
Tachi dori	staff taking techniques
Jo tori	freestyle defense practice, any technique may be used.
Jiyu waza	freestyle attack, any attack may be used
Randori	2 person sword practice
Kumi tachi	2 person jo practice
Kumi jo	

ATTACKS

Attacks are often designated by naming the part of the body which is the focus of the attack and the action intended.

Tsuki	a thrust or punch
Mochi & tori (or dori)	a grab or hold
Uchi	a strike
Shime	a squeeze or choke
Kosa dori	cross hand grab
Katate tori	one-handed grasp on one wrist
Ryote tori	two-hands grasp, both wrists grasped
Morote dori & ryote mochi	two-handed grasp on one wrist
Shomen uchi	straight down strike to the top of the head
Yokomen uchi	45° strike to the side of the head
Mune tsuki (or tsuki)	straight punch to the stomach or chest (pronounced moo-net-ski)
Kata tori	shoulder grab
Ryokata tori	both shoulders grasped
Hiji tori	elbow grab
Ushiro	from behind
Eri tori	collar grabbed from behind
Kubi shime	neck choke
Mae geri	front kick
Mawashi geri	roundhouse kick
Yoko geri	side kick

Thus Ushiro Katatetori Kubishimi refers to an attack from behind in which the attacker holds one of the defender's hands and simultaneously chokes the neck.

DEFENSES

The defenses are designated by naming the attack and then the action which constitutes the defense. Thus the name of one complete Aikido technique is Ushiro Katatetori Kubishimi Koshinage.

Nage	throw
Irimi	entering in a straight line
Omote	to the front of uke
Ura	to the rear of uke
Osae	a pin
Soto	outside
Uchi	inside
Gaeshi	reverse
Mawashi	rotation

There are six take down-and-pin techniques:

Ikkyo (kote osae)	Number one technique. (arm pin.)
Nikyo (kote mawashi)	#2. Inward wrist twist. (wrist turning.)
Sankyo (kote hineri)	#3. Vertical wrist twist. (wrist twist)
Yonko (tekubi osae)	#4. Wrist pin, using pressure on the nerve. (wrist pin.)
Gokyo (ude nobashi)	#5. Similar to ikkyo but for knife disarming. (arm stretch.)
Royko	#6. Similar to ikkyo but an arm bar to the elbow

There are a number of throws with specific names:

Kote gaeshi	wrist twist
Kaiten nage	rotary throw
Shiho nage	four corners throw
Irimi nage	entering throw
Tenchi nage	“ten” means “heaven” and “chi” means “Earth”. The heaven - earth position of the hand has one hand high and the other low.
Juji garami or juji nage	entwined arms throw
Koshi nage	hip throw
Aiki otoshi	aiki drop, often against a rear bear hug
Sumi otoshi	corner drop
Ude garami	arm entwined lock

The largest number of Aikido throws have no specific names but are known under the heading of kokyu nage:

Kokyu nage	breath or timing throw. A throw which depends primarily on blending.
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AIKIDO HISTORY

Feudal Japan

The Japanese martial arts were developed by the *samurai*, the professional military caste in feudal Japan. This class came into being in the tenth century. At that time, Japan was ruled by an emperor and court aristocracy, and they employed the warriors in their political struggles. As time went on, the samurai came to hold the real power in Japan, and in the twelfth century they set up the shogunate, a military dictatorship which lasted (with a break of three years in the fourteenth century) until the nineteenth century.

The social structure during the shogunate period was a feudal pyramid with the emperor as the theoretical top and the *shogun* as the actual apex. A samurai family owed allegiance to the clan. The clan served a lord, the lord served a higher lord, and so on until the lines of power converged in the person of the shogun.

There was constant jockeying for position among the samurai lords, and the shogunate was held by different samurai lords and different samurai clans over the centuries. As a result, from the twelfth through the mid-seventeenth century — and especially for the last one hundred years of that period — there was constant fighting among the different clans and leaders. During this time, the samurai spent much of their time defending their own lands or serving their lords on the battlefields. The fact that there was a class of people whose permanent professional concern was fighting meant that the fighting arts received a good deal of attention and underwent a great deal of development and refinement. And the fact that there was constant fighting meant that this development and refinement took place under stringent, practical conditions and not merely in the theoretical atmosphere of a classroom.

Because the development and practice of the martial arts was rooted in the life and death stakes of warfare, the samurai could not afford to be satisfied with anything less than a real perfection of the fighting skills. As a result of this need for maximal effectiveness and efficiency, the samurai developed fighting techniques based on the principle of accord: the idea that the best way to deal with a force is to work in cooperation with it rather than against it. In the same way that a beginning swimmer thrashes around and wastes a lot of energy fighting the water, and an advanced swimmer cooperates with the water and uses much less effort, so the samurai warriors learned to cooperate with the medium in which they moved. That medium was the opponent's attack, and the greater the sensitivity of the warrior, the more he used the attack for his own defense and counterattack.

The principles of accord call for precise, sensitive movement and timing. Also of great importance is a deep knowledge of oneself and a similar understanding of one's opponent. Without an acute awareness of his foe a warrior was assured quick death. A superior warrior was not only technically brilliant, he was also extraordinarily sensitive, able to match, blend with even turn an attack back on the attacker. The warrior had not only to perceive exactly what his opponent was thinking and doing,

but he also had to be able to surprise the opponent, control his timing and disrupt his ability to focus an attack. At the same time, the warrior had to maintain his own self-control and balance and prevent his opponent from influencing him. And all this took place under the pressures and distractions of the battlefield.

To develop these skills, training included intense study of the self as well as the other. The training in the martial arts emphasized that the two fighters formed a continuous, unified field rather than being merely separate, antagonistic objects. What the warrior had to understand and control in his own mind and body in order to fight effectively were the same things he had to understand and manipulate in his opponent to decrease his opponent's fighting effectiveness. The mental and physical presence of each warrior affected the other, and dealing with this was part of the combat. In order to fight well, a warrior had to focus his mind so that his intentions and consequently, his movements were crystal clear and strong. In addition to allowing the warrior to move well, this focused state of mind was also the foundation for both the ability to perceive the opponent's fighting movements and for the ability to disrupt the opponent's mind and body so as to impede his movements.

To learn mental focus, various meditation and purification disciplines were employed. From their beginnings in India and China, Korea and Japan, the martial arts were associated with the various meditative disciplines prevalent in the different countries. Shinto and esoteric Buddhist practices were commonly employed in the martial arts. Such disciplines were highly developed psychological tools which focused on and were able to manipulate effectively many very subtle mental and physical phenomena. It was because they had access to such disciplines that the samurai were able to extend their training far beyond the combat techniques per se into areas of mental and physical self-control and discipline and were able to deal with the whole person rather than just certain parts.

Meditation and other esoteric practices allowed the samurai to cultivate a state of mind that would allow him to fight well and, if necessary, die well. What state of mind enables a person facing deadly attack to embrace aggression and cooperate with it? Certainly a normal reaction to deadly peril is to freeze up and resist whatever is happening. The state of mind necessary for the use of the strategy of accord is a state of complete concentration, calmness, alertness and inner peace, what Aikido calls being Centered.

Tokugawa Shogunate

By the late sixteenth century, forces were at work to unify Japan; and Ieyasu Tokugawa succeeded in unifying Japan in the middle of the seventeenth century. He set up the Tokugawa Shogunate, which lasted until the mid-nineteenth century, when the emperor was restored to power. The Tokugawa Shogunate created a strong central government and brought all the lords under the direct control of the shogun. It was a relatively stable and peaceful two hundred-and-forty year period. The shogunate controlled the economy and also kept the families of the lords as hostages in the capital city of Edo (present day Tokyo). Among the measures taken to ensure stability, foreign trade and Christian missionary work were prohibited, and Japan was isolated

from the rest of the world. In this way new ideas and practices were kept from coming into the land and the status quo was maintained.

During this period, the samurai were relegated to bureaucratic roles, with little fighting to do. Some killed time in a life of dissipation, but others became rededicated to the pursuit of the martial arts. For many of them, however, this rededication involved a shift in the meaning of these arts. The martial arts had always stressed mental as well as physical training in preparation for combat. However, before the Tokugawa era, mental training was practiced as part of the fighting arts in order to perfect skill in fighting. In the Tokugawa period, since there was relatively little need for fighting, the fighting arts often came to be practiced as a form of mental training. For those arts which were transformed in this way--and not all were-- the aim of martial training became the attainment of a state of complete concentration and inner peace and the way of living that springs from it.

The shift of emphasis towards spiritual goals also frequently brought about a corresponding change in the nature of the actual techniques practiced. The movements began to be smoothed out as more attention was paid to how they felt and somewhat less attention was paid to their effectiveness in fighting. Nonetheless, there was still heavy emphasis placed on the actual life-and-death elements in the arts so as to preserve their rigor as spiritual training systems: after all, it was by coming face to face with death that the warrior had the opportunity to cultivate his self-understanding.

Meiji Restoration

In the end, the Tokugawa shogunate lacked the power to preserve the status quo. The economy became unstable and it was hard to raise enough money through taxation to support the samurai class. Western medical knowledge and military technology began to influence people. Literacy among the commoners grew, and they demanded more say in the government and more justice. There arose a feeling that in order to improve conditions in Japan and achieve equality with the foreign powers, a new spirit of Japanese nationalism would have to be cultivated. This feeling found a focus in the emperor. In 1868 the shogunate was overthrown and the emperor was restored to power. In 1871 feudalism was abolished, the government restructured, and the social strata redefined. The samurai were removed from power, and shortly afterwards the wearing of their two swords was made illegal and their special top-knot hair style forbidden. Finally, the social class system was abolished.

During this time, western military technology had come to have more and more importance. The traditional fighting skills of the samurai emphasized individual combat and personal encounter between highly trained fighters. The use of guns allowed a peasant with a few months of training to be the combat equal of a samurai with years of training, and the use of mass strategies allowed armies of gun-equipped peasants to overpower armies of traditionally equipped and trained samurai. The traditional fighting skills of the samurai became less and less important as time went on.

The samurai were not needed to fight, and with the abolition of the samurai class, the tax money which had been their source of support was no longer available. As a result, there were many skilled fighters who had no way of earning a living, and a number of them turned to teaching their combat knowledge as a way of earning money. In this way, the combat skills that had previously been the property of the samurai class were made available to the commoners. This allowed much wider dissemination of the skills than ever before, but also resulted in some changes.

In many cases, people modified the arts in ways which made them more satisfactory for use as sports. The main change here was that a match came to mean the artificial situation of a sport contest as opposed to the real, life-and-death situation of warfare. Naturally, each of the arts developed differently from the others. Some arts focused on sport techniques, some on combatively functional techniques and some on the use of combat practice as a spiritual path. In general, practitioners of any given art will tend to pay great attention to one of the three uses of the art and pay less attention to the other two. At the present time, there are in existence representatives of the original purely combative arts (e.g. Jujitsu or Kenjitsu) as well as many newer arts devoted to self-understanding, sport (Judo or Kendo) and combat.

Development of Aikido

Morihei Ueshiba (pronounced Moh-lee -hay Oo-way-she-bah) was the creator of Aikido. To his followers today, Ueshiba is known as O'Sensei, which means "Great Teacher". O'Sensei was born in 1883 and died in 1969, so Aikido is one of the modern martial arts. Master Ueshiba began his studies of the martial arts shortly before 1900. He studied a number of styles of jujitsu, spear work and sword work, and was deeply influenced by the Shinto religion and the Omoto Kyo sect. In 1911 he encountered Sokaku Takeda, a master of Daito ryu Aiki-Jujitsu, and studied this form of grappling art with him for five years.

The word "Aiki" refers to the technical strategy upon which the defense maneuvers of Aikido are based. This strategy is one way of incorporating the principle of accord into defense movements, and it is usually talked about in English as "blending." In aiki, the warrior merges himself with the attack in a fluid, circular way. In merging or blending with an attack, there is no holding back, separateness. The attack comes in, the defender accepts it the way a whirlwind accepts anything that comes close, and then the defender releases his hold and throws the attack away.

The word "jitsu" translates as "technique." Thus a *jitsu* art is one which is concerned with technique and its practical applications in warfare. A jitsu art is generally a representative of the original arts which were straight combat systems, whereas a *do* art is one which has transformed combative practice into a path of self-discipline. (The arts which are primarily sport-oriented are also called *do* arts.)

Aiki-jujitsu formed the basis of O'Sensei's art of Aikido. He added techniques and movement principles that he had learned from his other practices and worked at refining his art. However, as he developed his art, O'Sensei began to feel that there was something lacking in his understanding of budo ("bu" + "martial," "do" = "path,"

“Budo” = “martial art”). He began to feel that everything he had learned was useful only for destruction.

If we look back over time, we see how the martial arts have been abused. During the Sengoku Period (1482-1558, “Sengoku” means “warring countries”) loyal lords used the martial arts as a fighting tool to serve their own private interests and to satisfy their greed. This I think was totally inappropriate. Since I myself taught martial arts to soldiers during the [Second World] War, I became deeply troubled after the conflict ended. This motivated me to discover the true spirit of Aikido. (Aiki News, Pranin, 20: Vol 18, August 2, 1976, p. 6)

After much inner searching, Ueshiba had an experience which revealed to him what he had been searching for.

One day I was drying myself off by the well. Suddenly a cascade of blinding golden flashes came down from the sky enveloping my body. Then immediately my body became larger and larger attaining the size of the entire universe. While overwhelmed by this experience, I suddenly realized that one should not think of trying to win. The form of budo must be love. One should live in love. This is Aikido. (Aiki News, Pranin, 20: Vol 18, August 2, 1976, p. 8)

This was in 1925, and this experience formed the basis of O'sensei's understanding of aiki and his way of using it in his art. Rather than seeing Aikido as no more than a way of joining movements together to result in a harmonious flow of motion, O'Sensei saw Aikido as a universal principle of love, and the practice in the fighting strategy of Aikido became a tool for discovering the universal principle of aiki. This can be seen in O'sensei's description of Aikido in “Memoir of the Master”, in the next section of this beginner's guide.

The name “Aikido” is composed of three Japanese characters. “Ai” means “harmony” or “love.” “Ki” means “energy” or “spirit.” And “Do” means “path.” Taken together, the characters which form the name of the art mean “The path to harmonious energy” or “The path to a loving spirit.”

The art of Aikido as it was taught by Master Ueshiba and is being taught by his successors focuses on training the spirit through study of the physical fighting techniques. As O'sensei grew older, the techniques he practiced continued to grow smoother and rounder. He modified the basic aikijujitsu techniques so that practice could be carried on with full force and yet have minimal risk of injury. However, since the techniques still remain very close to the original aikijujitsu techniques, it is easy to see how any given technique could be used so as to inflict severe injury or death to an attacker. As a result, the psychological impact of the life and death situation is preserved in Aikido and operates in its training of the spirit, and Aikido also continues to function as an effective self-defense method.

How do the techniques function as a means of changing aggressive attitudes? The key lies in the fact that it is attitude/intention which creates movement. The Aikido techniques are smooth, circular and gentle (in a powerful way), and no one can

perform harmonious movements if he is filled with fear or anger. These feelings automatically lead to intention to perform the type of movements called for by fear and anger — rigid, unbalanced, jerky movements of resistance and aggression. By examining his/her movement qualities during the execution of a defense technique, the Aikidoist can detect flaws in his/her attitude. And by working to correct his moves, the Aikidoist can correct her/his attitudes.

“MEMOIR OF THE MASTER” **BY MORIHEI UESHIBA, CREATOR OF AIKIDO.**

From *Aikido*, Kisshomaru Uyeshiba, Hozansha Publishing, Tokyo, 1963.

Ai = harmony or love

Ki = energy or spirit

Do = path

Bu = martial

Budo = martial arts

As ai (harmony) is common with ai (love), I decided to name my unique budo “Aikido”, although the word “aiki” is an old one. The word which was used by the warriors in the past is fundamentally different from that of mine.

Aiki is not a technique to fight with or defeat the enemy. It is the way to reconcile the world and make human beings one family.

The secret of Aikido is to harmonize ourselves with the movement of the universe and bring ourselves into accord with the universe itself. He who has gained the secret of Aikido has the universe in himself and can say, “I am the universe.”

I am never defeated, however fast the enemy may attack. It is not because my technique is faster than that of the enemy. It is not a question of speed. The fight is finished before it is begun.

When an enemy tries to fight with me, the universe itself, he has to break the harmony of the universe. Hence at the moment he has the mind to fight with me, he is already defeated. There exists no measure of time, fast or slow.

Aikido is non-resistance. As it is non-resistant it is always victorious.

Those who have a warped mind, a mind of discord, have been defeated from the beginning.

Then, how can you straighten your warped mind, purify your heart, and be harmonized with the activities of all things in Nature? You should first make God's heart yours. It is a Great Love, Omnipresent in all quarters and in all times of the universe. “There is no discord in love. There is no enemy of love.” A mind of discord, thinking of the existence of an enemy is no more consistent with the will of God.

Those who do not agree with this cannot be in harmony with the universe. Their budo is that of destruction. It is not constructive budo.

Therefore to compete in techniques, winning and losing, is not true budo. True budo knows no defeat. “Never defeated” means “never fighting.”

Winning means winning over the mind of discord in yourself. It is to accomplish your bestowed mission.

This is not mere theory. You practice it. Then you will accept the great power of oneness with Nature.

Don't look at the opponent's eyes, or your mind will be drawn into his eyes. Don't look at his sword, or you will be slain with his sword. Don't look at him, or your spirit will be distracted. True budo is the cultivation of attraction with which to draw the whole opponent to you. All I have to do is to keep standing this way.

Even standing with my back toward the opponent is enough. When he attacks, hitting, he will injure himself with his own intention to hit. I am one with the universe and I am nothing else. When I stand, he will be drawn to me. There is no time and space before Ueshiba of Aikido--only the universe as it is.

There is no enemy for Ueshiba of Aikido. You are mistaken if you think that budo means to have opponents and enemies and to be strong and fell them. There are neither opponents nor enemies for true budo. True budo is to be one with the universe; that is, to be united with the Center of the universe.

A mind to serve for the peace of all human beings in the world is needed in Aikido, and not the mind of one who wished to be strong or who practices only to fell an opponent.

When anybody asks if my Aiki budo principles are take from religion, I say, "No! My true budo principles enlighten religions and lead them to completion.

I am calm however and whenever I am attacked. I have no attachment to life or death. I leave everything as it is to God. Be apart from attachment to life and death and have a mind which leaves everything to Him, not only when you are being attacked but also in your daily lives.

True budo is a work of love. It is a work of giving life to all beings, and not killing or struggling with each other. Love is the guardian deity of everything. Nothing can exist without it. Aikido is the realization of love.

I do not make a companion of men. Whom, then, do I make a companion of: God. This world is not going well because people make companions of each other, saying and doing foolish things. Good and evil beings are all one united family in the world. Aikido leaves out any attachment; Aikido does not call relative affairs good or evil. Aikido keeps all beings in constant growth and development and serves for the completion of the universe.

In Aikido we control the opponent's mind before we face him. That is, we draw him into ourselves. We go forward in life with this attraction of our spirit, and attempt to command a whole view of the world.

We ceaselessly pray that fights should not occur. For this reason we strictly prohibit matches in Aikido. Aikido's spirit is that of loving attack and that of peaceful reconciliation. In this aim we bind and unify the opponents with the will power of love. By love we are able to purify others.

True budo is the loving protection of all beings with a spirit of reconciliation. Reconciliation means to allow the completion of everyone's mission.

The "Way" means to be one with the Will of God and practice it. If we are even slightly apart from it, it is no longer the Way.

We can say that Aikido is a way to sweep away devils with the sincerity of our *breath* instead of a sword. That is to say, to turn the devil-minded world into the World of Spirit. This is the mission of Aikido.

The devil-mind will go down in defeat and the Spirit rise up in victory. Then Aikido will bear fruit in this world.

Without budo a nation goes to ruin, because budo is the life of loving protection and is the source of the activities of science.

Those who seek to study Aikido should open their minds, listen to the sincerity of God through Aiki, and practice it. You should understand the great ablution of Aiki, practice it and improve without hindrance. Willingly begin the cultivation of your spirit.

I want considerate people to listen to the voice of Aikido. It is not for correcting others; it is for correcting your own mind. This is Aikido. This is the mission of Aikido and should be your mission.

RANK & TESTING

Rank is not important in and of itself. Taking a test is a valuable opportunity to practice harder and consolidate your understanding of and skill in the techniques that are part of your test.

After gaining enough practice time to meet the minimum test requirements, students are welcome to apply to take a test. *Note that the hours required for a test are counted from the last test.* The minimum hours needed for the different ranks are given in the table of tests. Note that any given student may need more than the minimum number of hours to be comfortable and skilled enough with the techniques, and the instructors may ask students to continue practicing until they are truly ready for the test rather than allowing them to take tests for which they are not ready.

Preparation for a test consists of practicing the specified techniques after class and during the free practice period. Remember to review all the techniques for the earlier tests you have taken. You can ask the higher ranked students or the instructors for help in refining your techniques. It is helpful to practice with as many people as possible since each person will contribute something a little different to your understanding of the techniques. You will be ready for the test when you have attained a certain fluidity and comfort with the execution of the techniques.

Note that there are many correct ways of executing Aikido techniques. The head instructors, in accordance with USAF standards, have designated the appropriate test versions of the required techniques. People practicing for a test normally give each other feedback about their techniques, and different people may be in the habit of doing the techniques differently. However, remember not to be too pushy about the right way to achieve harmonious movement. If there are questions about the techniques, ask the black belts, or ask the head instructors, who are the final arbiters of technique.

Testing involves more than just the physical execution of the techniques. We want to see presence of mind and good flow. In addition, your attitude toward yourself, toward your practice partners, and toward Aikido are part of the test. It is necessary to have a sincere commitment to practicing hard and doing well coupled with a healthy nonattachment about taking the test and passing or failing. If a person is too anxious to take the test and get the rank, that means they are not ready to take the test. If a student resents or resists being corrected and doesn't feel gratitude for the caring and effort it takes to point out mistakes, that means they have already failed the test. On the occasion in which someone does fail a test, the attitude with which they receive that failure is important. Failing a test is not really a failure. It is an opportunity for self-reflection and increased dedication to learning. It is important not to become discouraged with the difficulties of polishing your technique and your spirit but to keep practicing with enthusiasm and sincerity.

In the test, the instructors will look for a number of elements in your execution of the techniques. The outside of the technique should be appropriate to your level of practice. That is: (1) your posture must be adequate, (2) the execution of the technique must be precise, (3) movement must be relaxed, smooth and continuous, and (4) there must be proper blending with and control of the attack. The inside of the technique must also be appropriate. You must maintain (1) focused concentration, (2)

a proper balance of grounding and ease, (3) a sense of expansive, compassionate presence, and (4) a sense of connection to and caring about the attacker.

You begin the test by moving out to the center of the mat with your uke. You both bow to O'Sensei, then to the instructors, then to each other. You should perform whatever technique is asked for, on both right and left sides, with both omote and ura versions, and you should continue to demonstrate the technique until asked to switch to another. At the end of the test, you bow to your partner, then to the instructors, then to O'Sensei, and then move back to the line of students.

Application forms will be available for students to fill out. Fill the form at least one month before the test so that the instructors can begin to evaluate your readiness for testing. If you have any physical limitations that make certain test requirements inappropriate for you, please note that on your application form, and the test requirements will be adjusted accordingly.

TEST REQUIREMENTS

The United States Aikido Federation has defined a standard set of rank requirements for adults, and we have added a few additional requirements to that.

Falling: You should be able to demonstrate proper ukemi (falling technique). For fifth kyu, you should be able to demonstrate back rolls. For fourth kyu, you should be able to demonstrate forward rolls and shikko (knee walking). For second kyu, you should be able to demonstrate breakfalls.

Conditioning: You should be in physical shape to have the stamina for the test, doing your own techniques and also acting as attacker for another person taking the test. If you need advice on conditioning, ask the head instructors.

Attacking: In addition to the defender's movements in the specified techniques, you must be prepared to demonstrate that you understand the attacker's movements. In a test, the attacker and the defender are cooperating to demonstrate what Aikido flow should be.

Jo Technique: For second kyu and above, students will be expected to know Aikido jo technique, including the jo kata and jo suburi, jo throwing, and jo take aways.

Seminars: Seminars are invaluable in broadening your awareness of different approaches to Aikido. Students who are testing for fourth and third kyu should have attended at least one seminar per year since their last test. Students who are testing for second kyu and above should have attended at least two seminars per year since their last test.

TEST SCHEDULE:

Tests are usually conducted for adult students in March, July and November. Tests for children may be scheduled more frequently.

A properly filled out USAF test application and a check for the testing fee and, if applicable, your USAF membership fee are due one week before the test.

CHILDREN'S TESTS

The following requirements represent the minimum number of classes. A given individual may need more than the minimum to be ready for testing.

YELLOW BELT	40 classes	katatori ikkyo, munetsuki kotegaeshi, back sit fall,
GREEN BELT	40 classes	katatetori shihonage, ryotetori tenchinage, back roll shikko
PURPLE BELT	50 classes	shomenuchi ikkyo shomenuchi iriminage yokomenuchi kokyunage yokomenuchi shihonage forward roll.
RED BELT	60 classes	katatetori kaitennage tsuki iriminage ushiro tekubitori kotegaeshi suwarewaza- shomenuchi ikkyo. break falls

UNITED STATES AIKIDO FEDERATION PROMOTIONAL TEST REQUIREMENTS

<p style="text-align: center;">5th Kyu (60 hours)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shomenuchi Ikkyo (omote & ura) 2. Shomenuchi Iriminage 3. Katatetori Shihonage (omote & ura) 4. Ryotetori Tenchinage 5. Tsuki Kotegaeshi 6. Ushiro Tekubitori Kotegaeshi 7. Morotetori Kokyuho 	<p style="text-align: center;">2nd Kyu (200 hours)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shomenuchi Shihonage 2. Shomenuchi Kaitennage 3. Yokomenuchi Gokyo 4. Ushiro Tekubitori Shihonage 5. Ushiro Tekubitori Jujinage 6. Ushiro Kubishime Koshinage 7. Morotetori Nikkyo 8. Hanmi-Handachi: Shomenuchi Iriminage Katatetori Nikkyo Yokomenuchi Kotegaeshi 9. Freestyle -2 persons
<p style="text-align: center;">4th Kyu (80 hours)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shomenuchi Nikkyo (omote & ura) 2. Yokomenuchi Shihonage (omote & ura) 3. Tsuki Iriminage 4. Ushiro Tekubi Sankyo (omote & ura) 5. Ushiro Ryokatatori Kotegaeshi 6. Suwari Waza: Shomenuchi Ikkyo Nikkyo (omote & ura) Katatori Sankyo 	<p style="text-align: center;">1st Kyu (300 hours)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Katatori Menuchi -5 techniques 2. Yokomenuchi -5 techniques 3. Morotetori -5 techniques 4. Shomenuchi -5 techniques 5. Ryotetori -5 techniques 6. Koshinage -5 techniques 7. Tantotori 8. Hanmi-Handachi: Ushiro Waza -5 techniques 9. Freestyle -3 persons
<p style="text-align: center;">3rd Kyu (100 hours)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yokomenuchi Iriminage (2 ways) 1. Yokomenuchi Kotegaeshi 3. Tsuki Kaitennage 4. Ushiro Ryokatatori Sankyo (omote & ura) 5. Morotetori Iriminage (2 ways) 6. Shomenuchi Sankyo (omote & ura) 7. Suwari Waza: Shomenuchi Iriminage Shomenuchi Nikkyo (omote & ura) 8. Hanmi-Handachi: Katatetori Shihonage Katatetori Kaitennage (uchi & soto mawari*) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Sho-Dan (400 hours)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All of 1st Kyu requirements 2. Tachitori 3. Jotori 4. Henkawaza** 5. Freestyle - 4 persons <p style="text-align: center;">Ni-Dan (600 hours)</p> <p>Attend 2 seminars per year after Sho-Dan. Subject of exam to be determined by examiner at the time of the exam. Kaeshiwaza***</p> <p style="text-align: center;">San-Dan (600 hours)</p> <p>Attend 2 seminars per year after Ni-Dan. Subject of exam to be determined by examiner at the time of the exam.</p>

*Uchi & Soto Mawari - both inside (uchi) and outside (soto) movements

**Henekawaza - switching from one technique to another. Examiner will call the first technique.

***Kaeshiwaza - counter techniques. Uke applies the technique to nage. Original technique will be called by examiner (e.g., to apply sankyo against nikkyo.)

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| 1. Hanmi - Handachi-uke standing, nage sitting | 9. Tachitori - attack with boken |
| 2. Jotori - jo taking techniques | 10. Tantotori - attack with knife |
| 3. Katatetori- one hand grab to wrist | 11. Tsuki - thrust or punch |
| 4. Katatori - one hand grab to the shoulder | 12. Ushiro Kubishime - choke from behind with free hand grabbing wrist |
| 5. Morotetori - two hands on one | 13. Ushiro Ryokatatori - both shoulders grabbed from behind |
| 6. Ryotetori - both wrists grabbed from the front | 14. Ushiro Tekubitori - both wrists grabbed from behind |
| 7. Shomenuchi - straight down strike to forehead | 15. Ushiro Waza - any attack from behind |
| 8. Suwariwaza - techniques from kneeling | |

U.S. Aikido Federation Promotional Test Requirements

Techniques Organized by Attack for 5th Through 2nd Kyu

Shomenuchi

- 5 Ikkyo omote
Ikkyo ura
Iriminage
- 4 Nikkyo omote
Nikkyo ura
Suwari Waza: Ikkyo
- 3 Sankyo omote
Sankyo ura
Suwari Waza: Iriminage
Suwari Waza: Nikkyo omote
Suwari Waza: Nikkyo ura
- 2 Shihonage
Kaitennage
Hanmi Handachi: Iriminage

Yokomenuchi

- 4 Shihonage omote
Shihonage ura
- 3 Iriminage (2 ways)
Kotegaeshi
- 2 Gokkyo
Hanmi Handachi: Kotegaeshi

Tsuki

- 5 Kotegaeshi
- 4 Iriminage
- 3 Kaitennage

Katatetori

- 5 Shihonage omote
Shihonage ura
- 3 Hanmi Handachi: Shihonage
Hanmi Handachi: Kaitennage uchi
mawari
Hanmi Handachi: Kaitennage soto
mawari
- 2 Hanmi Handachi: Nikkyo

Katatori

- 4 Suwari Waza: Nikkyo omote
Suwari Waza: Nikkyo ura
Suwari Waza: Sankyo

Morotetori

- 5 Kokyuho
- 3 Iriminage (2 ways)
- 2 Nikkyo

Ryotetori

- 5 TENCHINAGE

Ushiro Tekubitori

- 5 Koegaeshi
- 4 Sankyo omote
Sankyo ura
- 2 Shihonage
Jujinage

Ushiro Kubishime

- 4 Kotegaeshi
- 3 Sankyo omote
Sankyo ura
- 2 Koshinage

Freestyle

- 2 persons